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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000625

DEPT FOR SE GRATION, S/USSES, AF A/S CARSON, AF/E
NSC FOR MGAVIN AND HUDSON
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SUBJECT: FORMER "BUTCHER OF THE NUBA" NAMED SOUTHERN KORDOFAN
GOVERNOR IN A CABINET RESHUFFLE

Refs: A. Khartoum 523
[1](#)B. Khartoum 264

[1](#)1. (SBU) In a Government of National Unity (GNU) cabinet reshuffle on May 7, President Omar Al-Bashir appointed alleged Janjaweed financier and International Criminal Court-indictee Ahmed Mohamed Haroun Governor of Southern Kordofan. Haroun, a Northern Kordofan state native and lawyer by profession, served as the Minister of Social Affairs in Southern Kordofan in the 1990s and is a founding father of the notorious Popular Defense Forces (PDF - tribal militia supporting the Khartoum regime), which terrorized civilians in the Nuba Mountains during the North-South civil war. After serving in the Southern Kordofan state government, he became coordinator for the PDF from 1999-2003, and was then appointed as the State Minister (i.e., deputy Minister) of the Interior in Khartoum. In this capacity, he managed the Darfur Security Desk, which coordinated different government bodies, including the Sudanese police force, the Janjaweed, the Sudan Armed Forces and the National Intelligence and Security Service, all of which were involved in the counterinsurgency campaign against Darfur rebels. Following Haroun's indictment by the ICC in 2007, President Al-Bashir appointed him as the Government of National Unity's State Minister for Humanitarian Affairs, whose jurisdiction includes overseeing international assistance to Darfuri internally-displaced persons (IDPs).

[1](#)2. (SBU) Haroun's appointment as the Governor of Southern Kordofan comes in direct response to the Sudan People's Liberation Movement's (SPLM) appointment of political heavyweight and Nuba Mountains native Abdel Aziz Al Helou as Deputy Governor of Southern Kordofan (ref. A). Both Al Helou and Blue Nile state Governor Malik Agar (SPLM) have worked with Haroun in the past. The SPLM sees Haroun as a decision-maker with the capacity and connections to get things done, both for good or ill. Deputy Speaker of the Southern Kordofan State Legislatures Sadiq Mansour (SPLM) told USAIDoff on May 8 that Haroun would be more effective in making progress in the state than was former Governor Omar Suleiman (NCP), but he feared Haroun would use his power to manipulate a critical NCP elections' win in the Nuba Mountains.

[1](#)3. (SBU) With a deep knowledge of Southern Kordofan and strong ties to actors along its northern (North Kordofan) and western (South Darfur) borders, Haroun's appointment as Governor is a strategic move by the NCP in the volatile North-South border region. With national elections approaching in early 2010, Haroun has strong links to the Government of Sudan's (GoS) armed militias, which according to the SPLM, are well-armed by the NCP in the state. Haroun's history of violence in the Nuba Mountains during the civil war earned him the nickname "The Butcher of the Nuba." This along with the ICC indictment against him for alleged human rights violations in Darfur and his strong links to GoS regime and military actors, lead many of the Nuba to fear that he will use

militias to further destabilize the state and orchestrate an NCP electoral victory. State elections in the Nuba Mountains are critical. Under terms of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), there will be 2011 popular consultations in Southern Kordofan through which the newly-elected state legislature will have the power either to endorse CPA implementation there or negotiate modifications with the GNU. The SPLM sees the popular consultation as the only hope for Southern Kordofan to reach a final status more acceptable than the one it was granted in the CPA. [Note: The CPA deems both Southern Kordofan and Southern Blue Nile part of the North. Therefore, they are not permitted a referendum vote to opt to join the South if the South secedes from the North in 2011. Instead, both states are rather authorized the right to conduct ill-defined "popular consultations" on their final status. End Note.]

¶4. (SBU) Comment: Both the SPLM and the NCP clearly are sending their "heavy hitters" to this volatile border state prior to 2010 national elections and the 2011 popular consultation that will determine Southern Kordofan's post-2011 trajectory. Southern Kordofan is rife with feelings of deep frustration over CPA implementation, due to the lack of benefits its people believe they have received in terms of development and integration of SPLM cadres into the state's administration. It is also a region of great insecurity, given its location along the militarized (and yet to be demarcated) North-South border and SPLM allegations of increased arming by the NCP of Arab tribes against the Nuba. The new governance arrangement in the Nuba Mountains with Haroun and Helou at the helm can go one of two ways. Since both leaders are known to be able to get things done and have been intimately involved in Southern Kordofan politics (including the 2002 Nuba Mountains cease-fire agreement and CPA negotiations on the State's protocol),

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they might be able to make progress together in a state previously orphaned by the parties and underserved by the CPA. On the other hand, Haroun could be [and we suspect is] part of the GoS campaign to divide and conquer the region through the NCP's use of armed Arab tribes prior to elections.

¶5. (SBU) Comment continued: The USG needs to begin thinking now about best-case scenarios for Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states in the likely event that southerners vote to secede in 2011. We should move to work with local-government officials (including Haroun and Al Helou) and with the SPLM and NCP at a higher level, as well as local tribes on the ground, to try and arrive at an acceptable governance solution for these states post-2011 if peace is to be preserved along the fragile border area.

FERNANDEZ